

## Board of Trustees Response to Student Sit-In

HU Communications <ouc@howard.edu>

Fri 10/15/2021 6:20 PM

To: Alfred, Marcus <marAlfred@Howard.edu>

[View this email in your browser](#)



Howard University Board of Trustees



October 15, 2021

Dear Howard University Students and Community,

Howard University represents a long-standing tradition of using our voices to drive change. The student voice is – and always will be – an essential component of the Howard University community. Simply put, we hear you and we continue to welcome your viewpoints on all matters pertaining to Howard.

I'd like to address numerous concerns shared with the Board of Trustees over the last several days with regards to housing and to affiliate trustees on the board. As chairman, I speak for the Board in acknowledging the concerns you have raised. Over the past few months, we have been working tirelessly with the administration and in close partnership with our student and faculty leaders to create solutions to the issues the community has raised. We recognize the urgency at hand and share your passion. We also know that many of these issues will take time to resolve.

The board supports and encourages the administration's open, constructive dialogue with students. Two weeks ago, students and senior administrators began meeting. Yesterday, President Frederick, along with cabinet members and the dean of the chapel, met with student leaders from the Howard University Student Organization (HUSA), Undergraduate Student Assembly (UGSA), The Hilltop, and other student groups to discuss the list of concerns from the sit-in. The goal is to cultivate spaces for us to listen and discuss prominent issues on students' minds. This meeting acted as a conduit for students and administrators to have a direct line of contact, and, as a result of the success of these meetings, the administration is open to developing additional ways to increase participation and visibility of these gatherings.

Where issues exist, we will fix them. I want to acknowledge what has been done so far to alleviate the housing issues students have been experiencing. The University has always guaranteed housing for freshmen and sophomores; currently, 94 percent of first- and second-year students are living in Howard University residences. This Fall, Howard secured and provided additional housing for 700 students, a 15 percent increase in the total number of beds available for students compared to the 2019-2020 academic year. We recognize that, despite our efforts, there are those in our community who have struggled to find housing opportunities. We are committed to helping these students and working with the administration to ensure adequate on-campus housing conditions.

We remain committed to our decision to update the board structure. Howard students hold an array of opinions, as do faculty and alumni. This sit-in reinforces the fact that hearing from a much wider group of students on a

constant basis is not only necessary but critical. We are committed to having at least 50 percent of the board be represented by alumni— currently, 64 percent of our board members are alumni. As communicated in June, we will offer the past elected student affiliate trustees, who were not seated at the time due to the pandemic, an opportunity to serve a one-year term as full trustees. The revised board structure, combined with our determination to broaden our community engagement, will allow more – not fewer – voices to be heard, and we are actively working on additional ways to make our commitment to getting broader input from all stakeholders a reality.

The June decision regarding affiliate trustees has been addressed by the board several times, and we will continue to maintain an open dialogue with all stakeholders. The Student Life Committee of the board has plans to hold a dialogue session in late October with select student leaders, and we very much look forward to that conversation.

We will continue to foster open conversations across the entire institution because we understand the value of hearing all perspectives, whether through town halls, community dialogues or through the Student Life Committee. Your voices bring life to the Howard community and campus and have strengthened Howard into the institution it is today. We believe that it is important to engage student leaders in a manner that facilitates better communication and positions the board to take necessary action to make our University stronger. We know we have a gap to bridge in order to meet your expectations and ours. While we may have closed the gap in several areas, challenges remain. This acknowledgment is captured in our strategic plan and ongoing efforts.

This academic year has been – and will continue to be – an adjustment for the entire Howard community. As a board, we remain committed to maintaining a dialogue with every stakeholder in the Howard community. The well-being and future of the University is front and center in all our decisions as board members.

As Bison, you deserve the best we have to offer, and we pledge to be better and deliver just that.

Excellence in Truth and Service,

Larry Morse (B.A. '73)  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

---



Howard University Board of Trustees  
2400 Sixth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20059

---

This email was sent to [marAlfred@Howard.edu](mailto:marAlfred@Howard.edu)  
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)  
Howard University · 2225 Georgia Ave NW · Washington, DC 20059-1014 · USA